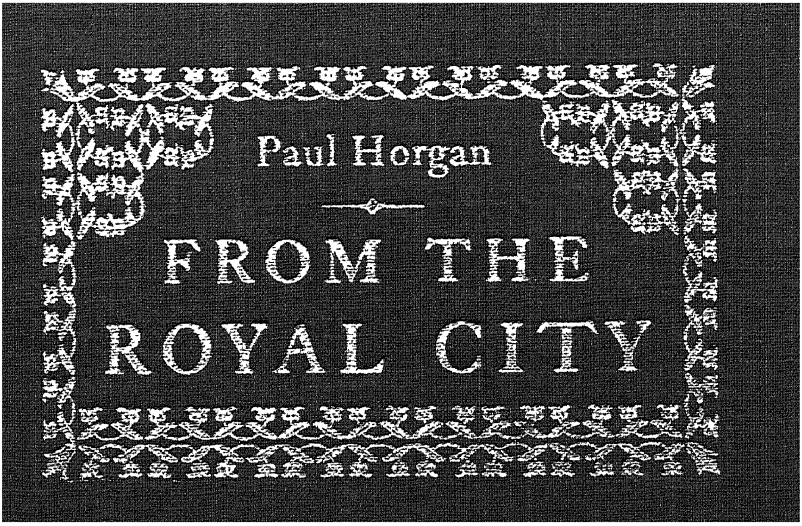

Paul Horgan
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ROYAL CITY

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From THE ROYAL CITY

of the

HOLY FAITH of *St. FRANCIS* of *ASSISI*

Being five accounts of Life in that place: The Captain General, 1690; The Evening Air, 1730; Triumphal Entry, 1780; Bittersweet Waltz, 1846; and Frock Coats & the Law, 1878.

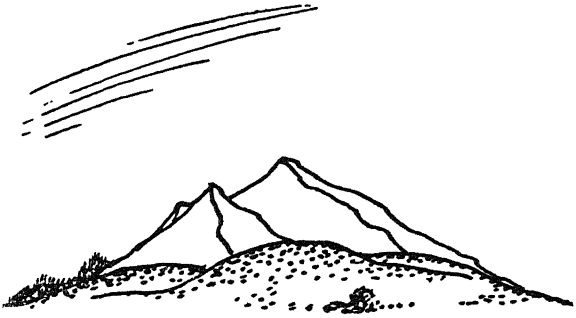
PAUL HORGAN



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I 1690

THE CAPTAIN GENERAL

THE CAPTAIN GENERAL, A HUGE MAN MADE FOR wearing armor, knew in the year 1690 that what he had to conquer was a thing aside from intelligence. Spain, Europe, all that he knew with his heart and his half-forgotten memory of race and family, were counters in the game of character he played with himself.

It was another matter, taking strange weapons, to cross over mountains in the blue of winter and come down on the tawny plateaus in spring like a vengeance upon Indians.

The Captain General, intelligent with the flowery thoughts of his European time, learned his new land, and marched with an army that was a burlesque of the military in all except heart. He crossed every pueblo in his province, making, in the name of God, the cruciform gesture; and lessening the sincerity of that no whit by resorting to musketry if necessary. It was indubitable that God was on his side; but with the whole country pitted against the new man—with space as great a menace as Apaches, and sudden final spendings of endurance; horses and men willing to die in the yellow hills studded with black bushes of scrub pine—the triumphs of conquest must be, he knew, won severely with defeat and transfiguration of inhabitant and culture.

Such a task took imagination, it took ruthlessness; and there

was plenty of both in an educated man of 1690. Authority was sacred. And a man's life was subject to ideals, whose expression must be visible.

The Captain General lived in the Palace of the Governors, with the plaza of the Royal City of the Holy Faith of Saint Francis before its long portal, and a garden in its rear. It was the greatest building in the province, and the Captain General, walking through his dozen rooms, one after another, to reach an audience, felt security and royalty that were explicit. The walls were so thick that the futility of attack was clear, even to the resentful Indians. The low thick ceiling turned away the sun and prevented the snow from chilling the rooms, where fireplaces flashed and danced with fires made from piñon wood, which sent up into the sharp air of the mountains an incense sweeter than the smell of wild flowers.

There were few enough comforts, hardly any time for them; and the Captain General earned his marquisate from Felipe V by putting on his woolen tunic and breeches, strapping his armor against these protective cloths, dropping a serape over the metal to keep it cool from the sun, and leading his men on horseback, with a mule train of supplies, out over the rolling deserts to the belligerent pueblos.

The conflicts that happened, under pink mud walls, represented the forces of the Renaissance against those of the Middle Ages.

The Captain General directed fire from musketry that amazed and slaughtered the Indian, who, hundreds of years more ignorant about Christ and gunpowder, rained arrows and stones upon the conquerors, and sheets of boiling water, and cried with desperation upon gods of earth and sky.

One time the Captain General concluded a victory against a wicked tribe; his guns destroyed their hundreds, his soldiers captured women and children, who would become slaves and very valuable. In a gesture of finality the defeated Indian chief hanged himself in the heart of his town.

But in the Royal City, when evening came down from the

mountains, where white snow showed always against the darker blue, or darker green, or black, of the sky, the sound of bells ringing to the glory of God assured the Captain General that the proper order was established. He was a good man, simple in his submission of his armed strength to the first tenets of the church. No one could be trusted here, he thought, except his priests, and a few soldiers, his horses, and the image he carried of his own vital necessity.

It is true that intrigues arose against him; and while he waited in the militant pride of his station, for imprisonment, the bitterness that he felt was enriched by memories of the conquests of his arm and will.

How beautiful the valley of the Rio Grande was when he marched up in the springtime! The yellow river went widely down the fertile land, where willows leaned idly over the sandy run, and pale green grass, sharp and tender in early growth, was crushed by the stamp and suck of his horses' hooves as they stopped in the swampy mud to water. Across the sand hills that they must scale on the other side of the river, the mountains, more mountains, lay back against the thunder-heads that awaited the afternoon heat for their delivery. The sun was bright; how bright the sun always turned the after-images when he closed his eyes for a moment!

Nor would he ever forget the snow that visited him his first winter in the Palace, driving the sweet piñon smoke back down the chimneys, muffling the call of the bell from the soldiers' chapel, closing away the mountains for days, and imprisoning the garrison within their mud walls, restless, afraid because there was no way of watching for danger, homesick like little children under the strangeness of the snowfall, for before the storm came, the days had been autumnally golden, sharp in the mornings, and pure with heat at noon.

In those whistling nights, the Captain General sat before his fire, nursing his gray beard over his work table, composing his

reports that travelled pages to complete one majestic sentence.

When the snow was falling, with sounds that whispered in the stillness, an unaccustomed gray light was upon the world, the Palace was dark, the tapestries and the brown carved wood gave out no comfort. But when the sun came back, the brilliance was terrible, like an ideal suddenly made plain on the altar, a vision.

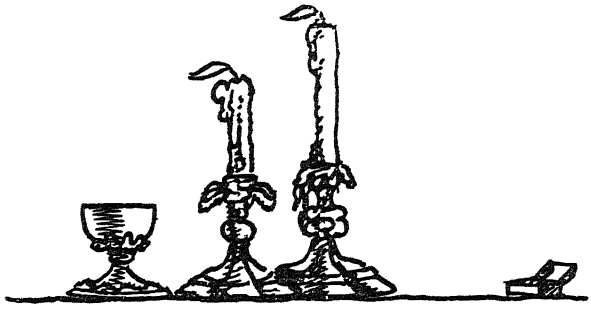
The Palace of baked mud, with its low square rooms in endless succession, was coveted. The Captain General scorned the intrigues against him. But they overcame him. He was imprisoned, yielding with a reluctance of soul. Even in his fury, which he disdained to show, he thought how this outrage was only an example of the uncertainty anyone had to face here, and an admonition towards the faith required for triumph.

But the Palace knew him again. The intriguers were put down. He returned, in full command once more, his many names following his title as proudly as his soldiers followed him. The Viceroy and the King heaped him with assurances. He returned to his Palace, he walked in his garden below the high walls, he heard the pleas, he granted the appeals, he strove against famine with yellow corn, he went out again buckled and plated against the marauding Indians.

Once more it was autumn; he knew the sharp scents of those southern mountains in October, when aspens below the timber line turned their yellow leaves, and the pines contributed to the air. His soldiers followed him through the foothills of his domain and into the canyons where shadow and rock seemed to be of the same substance.

Armored, directing a campaign, secure in his valiant past, in a land which was his beloved enemy, he fell ill, was removed to the nearest village of adobe, and there died. For the last time he returned to the Royal City, to be received by God.

He lay under the altar in the soldiers' chapel, a part of the country that, in receiving him, ceased in some degree to be the impassive foe of his kind.



II 1730

THE EVENING AIR

IT COULD BE NOTHING BUT CONFUSION, THOUGH ONE must hide that, thought the Condesa de Fuentes y Lucientes. She knew that the values of home were struggling to be established here.

The autocracies of God and King must prevail, finally, anywhere.

But in the meantime, she turned her gaze, without opinion, on the Governor's dinner guests. The usual priests, four officers, the wife of one of them, from Mexico City, the cacique of the Indian village— that was really confusing—the German merchant, herself, and her son.

Two women.

Naturally, there was position to maintain.

In and out through the deep, white doorway, the Indian servants carried the food. There were silver platters heaped with chickens, boiled rice, peppered sauces, and hard-boiled eggs carved into garnishings.

The Condesa noticed that the Indian cacique watched the Indian servants with a scowl. He disapproved? Or did he know these servants?

One of them, a small girl with hair cut in a soft bang across her eyebrows, moved with a straight loveliness. Her eyes were

downcast. Her mouth lay half open, giving her a stupid look; it quite destroyed a final effect of beauty. The Condesa shrugged; she was overwhelmed by another of the desolations that visited her whenever she remembered the world that lay between her heart and this wretched village of mud.

She was elaborately gowned, her fatly modelled face was overlaid with powder and rouge; she had made no concessions to the primitive society of the Royal City. Her jewels were as magnificent, her aged arrogance as acutely tempered, as if she were in Spain where she belonged, where, with the pomps of attending bishops, she could hold court until death should overtake her fashionably, and she would be carried by eight nobles to a solemn requiem high Mass in a cathedral.

Her hands rested on the table, she fingered the heavy silver fork that was, with its kind, still an innovation to the natives of 1730. Behind her the pretty Indian girl splashed wine into cups of silver.

The Condesa looked at her son.

Had God made her duty plain enough?

As he sat there, listening to an officer, there was a strange mimicry of his dead father in the cut of his features; there was also a disturbing memory of his mother in the calculativeness of his eyes. The Condesa said to herself again that she had done the only thing possible, on receiving the letters.

At the age of sixty-three, with her indignation as the backbone of the strength that brought her across the ocean to Mexico, and thence to the capital of New Mexico, she had come to snatch her last surviving son from the devil. But her duties were heavy, and she groaned with boredom as she gazed around the dining room in the Palace—a row of mud rooms, to be called a Palace!

She had rehearsed her accusations against this new country in the confessional many times. The priest had told her repeatedly that she must not expect too much; this was no longer an age of miracles. If people went into new lands to bring Christ and King,

they must expect to wait a few centuries before sin and society were safely and appropriately placed. In the murmur of a Latin absolution, the Condesa had to find what comfort she could. But in her times of bewilderment, when her presence in this mountain capital could hardly be true, after weeks of terrified expectation of death by drowning in a gray-green wave predicted in white foamy ruffles, she was possessed again of her doubts.

And in the person of her son, they found terrible confirmation.

Cipriano de Fuentes y Lucientes, last of four brothers, had joined the Viceroy's train for Mexico in 1724, young enough to desire independence and luxury, and eager enough to pretend that suffering and hardship would dignify these ends. The Viceroy had promised the Condesa a loyal watchfulness, which, in five years, expressed itself in the form of letters whose canon of infamies, disasters, debaucheries, vices (some of which were by him newly invented), depicted to the angry and devout mother what the New World had done to her son. In an effort to surprise him into repentance and salvation, she had sailed for Mexico. The Viceroy, her old friend, directed her to the capital of New Mexico, where her son had gone to Santa Fe on the staff of the Governor. God only knew.

Someone laughed shortly and loudly at the end of the table; the Condesa looked; it was the cacique, who at once went silent again. The candles bloomed steadily in the quiet. The Governor, tiring her with his affectations, assumed for her benefit, began to talk French, with bland ignorance of the limitations of his guests.

In a moment the Indian girl came with a great candelabrum, and stood in the doorway. The Governor arose, gave his arm to the Condesa, and they lead the party into the drawing room, where a harp stood, and where the evening air came in through the open windows.

There was still a faint nimbus along the rim of the mountains. That was beautiful. It brought peace. The dark line of the great crest of stone and agedness lay sharp against a lingering pale

green, above which the night began in darkness, where the stars' frozen life went forth.

The Condesa sat in a deep red velvet chair, while the officer's wife moved to the harp to play. The Indian cacique was content to look furious and sit quietly.

The Condesa closed her eyes; she looked old and pitiful without their valiant fire. Her throat and bosom were wrinkled and pushed by the severity of her stays. In her powdered wrinkles lay emeralds and diamonds, dusty and magnificent. A little wind sprang up outside and visited her through the window where she sat. She opened her eyes, astonished and moved. The candles dipped and bowed in the breeze, the harp faltered, then spoke on. Her breast was disturbed; the evening air carried on the little wind possessed such sharpness that it was like a memory of delight and remorse to cut her heart in a dream.

She looked around; her son was gone. The intoxications of that wind, bearing the sweet smell of the wood smoke, and the gathered scents of the mountains, of falling streams and fresh ferns, of melting snows through the clear summers, brought the Condesa a vision of the follies its draught must inspire. It was because in her heart she knew that her sacrifice had been unavailing that she now admitted the rise of tears to her eyes. The guests were impassive, through stupidity, she knew; the harp went amateurishly on with its silly melody. She arose, with an imperious nod to command the Governor to let her go alone; grasping at her heavy jewels on her bosom, she stepped through the long door to the stoned floor of the garden that ran behind the Palace. Here was solitude; the wall was high, she could barely see the mountains.

The wind came down across the wall, to stir the few flowers that grew in the garden. The big leaves of the sunflowers scratched along the adobe. Down beyond the dining-room windows, light shone out to the baked ground. It was clear yellow, and travelled as far as the dim orange-colored lantern that hung inside

the gateway where the horses and carts of the guests were left.

An ancient bitterness made the Condesa very tired. She walked slowly down the garden, tormenting herself with memories of the serene past, berating herself with the image of her failure. Her son was a depraved wretch; in vain did she plead and lecture and cajole. Pride and position, these were futile as arguments. His name, the meaning of society, the sacred responsibilities of our life in God and of the noble who must be the example for his inferiors—idle. The priest tried to assuage her; he would say that often the older morality collapsed when an old and tried life was put upon another kind of life. But her breast was filled with her two furies; she would strive until she died, in the name of God.

Down by the gateway, in the light, she saw someone moving. She was about to turn, but a laugh betrayed him, and clutching her embroidered gown with her old powdered hands where the dark rings clung like scales, she hastened her step towards the light.

"Cipriano!" she cried, in a voice that achieved only a tortured whisper. Her son turned; he released the Indian servant girl from his arms, and, without surprise or resentment, greeted his mother.

"You are drunk, you are crazy," she said, "I command you to come with me!"

He made a burlesque of a filial tenderness, and turned again to the Indian, who stood silent, her mouth hanging open. He grasped her in his arms again, leaning upon her against the wall. The Condesa felt the touch of despair; and she knew that death was the brother of that visitor.

She pulled back her heavy sleeves, and took from the ground by the gate a whip with three thongs of rawhide.

Her tears began to flow.

She raised her arm and called upon the Holy Ghost for grace.

She made the sign of the cross, her jewels sparkling dimly in the carriage lantern light, and crashed the whip across the striving lovers with a final strength.

III 1780
TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

THE CRY OF THE BELLS CAME WINGING ACROSS THE Royal City, as the sun reached the zenith and shone upon all things equally, the mountains crested in white, the tiny valley of the river, the roofs of the town.

There was high excitement in the people.

Early in the morning, scouts had come riding from the edge of Labajada to report that the Bishop's train was visible, the entry could be expected about noon.

The old brass cannon in the plaza before the Palace pumped the glory of this visit, its concussion knocking its fuse-holder down. In all the streets they had flung out flags and cloths, bright stuffs that caught the morning wind in jubilee. In the windows were candles, waiting to be lighted. The women had assumed their finest gowns and mantillas, and the men aggrandized the martial accoutrements of their costume with silver buttons and doeskin leggings. The altar of the soldiers' chapel was a glory of gold and silver and flowers—roses made from painted corn husks, fastened to dyed green willow twigs. The friars had worked for weeks. On the holy stone was laid the only piece of gold lace in their treasury.

The cannon was fired again.

In through the narrow lanes of the streets the answering salutes came from the Bishop's escort. It was not long before the

procession appeared. Horsemen goaded their animals to a plunging gait, the horses rolled their agate eyes in a stunning frenzy, the hymn of delight was taken up on all sides, the people shrieked with satisfaction. A cavalcade in armor and velvet preceded the carriages. These soldiers, exquisite in spite of their travel which had cost them no fighting, were proudly ignorant of the screaming girls that ran by their sides. They were followed by a long cart covered with hides, drawn by several mules. Bowing with satisfaction from its interior were the Bishop's personal attendants and lesser ecclesiastics.

And at last, the carriage of the Bishop himself.

This was a tremendous, airy vehicle pulled by eight mules; its interior was plainly visible—the Bishop sat revealed between his leather curtains which were rolled back. He sat with his chaplain, a Jesuit in military uniform. He made the sign of benediction every few feet, smiling upon the people that threatened his carriage wheels every step of the way. Its cushions were of brocaded blue velvet; an ivory crucifix hung facing the Bishop. Behind and above were piled the leather hampers full of vestments and ceremonial plate, the costumes of pomp and the vessels of celebration.

Beside the episcopal equipage rode the Governor of New Mexico on his white horse. His pride matched that of his people, but he disdained to show it.

The procession came into the plaza, where the brass cannon had been reduced to a smudged relic by the zeal of its attendants. The bells still sent flocks of the birds of jubilee over the city.

In the furious sunlight that pierced but did not heat the air, the Bishop stepped from his carriage with the assistance of his chaplain, turned once to bless the crowd, and entered the Palace with the Governor.

The people broke around the carriages to examine them, to exclaim over the silver-studded caparisons of the mules, the copper and gold hammered into the great spokes, the beautiful paint-

ings on the panels of the doors and on the wide leather springs which had supported the Bishop in his tremendous journey from his See in Mexico.

The bells cried a final paean, dying with echoes that ringed the plaza until silence held the early afternoon.

Later in the day, rumors went around.

The Bishop was resting. He had said that the zeal of the people was a glory to God. The Governor was a man whose might was qualified by goodness. The magnificence of the Palace was as comfortable as it was astonishing. The chaplain was empowered to say for His Lordship that it was indeed a great honor to be the first Bishop to visit the Royal City.

In the late afternoon, the chaplain put off his military uniform and took from his servant who was unpacking his leather hamper a cassock, which he put on. Then, secretly amused by the fury of preparations that these provincials were making in the city and in the Palace, he walked through the long galleries filled with girls and servants polishing silver, fabricating triumphal flowers with their utmost ingenuity, gossiping in ecstacy about the Bishop; and he came out into the garden, where two fruit trees lifted their young branches and created a hint of shade. In his hand he carried his breviary. The Bishop was asleep. There was time before the Angelus for a reverie or a prayer. He sat down on the carved wooden bench below the trees.

It was fortunate that the Bishop had been pleased by his reception. The situation was exquisite at best; for him to come overland with a meagre train those many hundred miles to subjugate the Franciscans who refused to recognize his episcopal authority, this was no trifle. Incredible, that there should be two points of view about the matter; yet it was known that the Franciscans were stubborn, they had founded the missions in the land, theirs the glory and the power.

The chaplain, who was a Jesuit from Spain with the complexion of the late eighteenth century upon his mind, moulded of

skepticism and opportunism, intelligence and faith, opened his book and found his hours, but closed it when he saw pacing under the wall, at the far end of the garden, a Franciscan monk whose head was sunk within his lowered cowl.

The chaplain arose, gathering his fine cassock about him to lift it above the sharp dust, and went to the other priest with an idea of testing local opinion as to the magnificent entry at noon.

He saw that his companion in prayer was past middle age, wretched in a robe of frayed wool, with rags at its hem dragging in the dust. From the weathered, burnt face grew a beard thick with gray. The Franciscan's eyes were weak from sunlight and disaster witnessed. He waited for the Jesuit to speak.

"You permit me to greet you?" said the chaplain.

"I am finishing my prayers," replied the monk.

"And I."

The Jesuit fell in with the slow pace of the monk; they walked back and forth in the blue shadow of the wall, silent, neither praying, yet reluctant to begin the duel which their meeting must bring.

At last the Franciscan, with simple straightforwardness, crossed himself, and replaced his hands inside his crossed sleeves. The chaplain coughed with formality, also crossed himself, and with a sudden movement of tact, dropped his cassock so that it dragged in the dirt.

The monk kindled.

"You are too polite," he said. "That is fine cloth to drag in our dirt."

"No, no, no," said the Jesuit, "if we are speaking in allegories, Father, I must say that our fine cloth is vanity and the dirt is God's earth, where the highest must finally be lowered."

"I have tasted every kind of dust and dirt in this kingdom," said the Franciscan. "I have saved hundreds of souls. I have never ridden in a painted carriage with gold and leather springs. Nor have I desired to possess anything that I and my brothers have not earned."

The chaplain was excited and happy that the monk was so immediately full of grievance. The Bishop would be the better able to prepare for it if this temper were sampled beforehand.

"Authority," he said, rolling his eyes out of sight for a second like the Bishop in the flood of a sermon, "is a sublime thing, we must all bow to its saving grace."

"Usurped authority," said the monk in the toneless voice of resignation, "is glory to no one."

They turned at the garden wall and paced towards the Palace, where the dinner for that evening was engaging six cooks.

"It is inevitable," he continued. "For more than a century my brotherhood has baptized, buried, and nursed, and consoled these people. Our tongues have hung with famine. Our souls have been lost and regained through exhaustion and temptation. We have gone in rags to the rich man and the poor man alike. Our work is never done; it is taken for granted—we are no longer miracles sent from heaven to succor and save the people. The country is changing. My Lord Bishop is the final conquest, we are overwhelmed."

The Jesuit turned his head away in embarrassment from the fierce light in those weak eyes; he smiled in his heart, at such passion, and approved impartially.

"It is true that goodness is a positive quality in mankind," he said at last, "but let us not conclude that there is only one kind of goodness. I assure you that my Lord Bishop, whom you hate so, is a great and good man. You have been generous in your preparations; the people are full of zeal. It is a beautiful city. Some day it must have a cathedral—"

The Franciscan gestured rudely with his heavy sleeves.

"Forgive me, Father," he said, "if I leave you to finish my prayers. You recognize the bitterness in my heart; grant me leave to go and banish it."

The Jesuit bowed. "I had hoped we might understand our differences so thoroughly that they would disappear!" he said, with a smile.

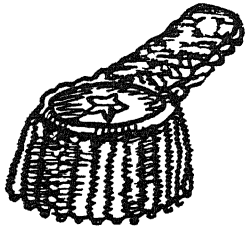
"They will disappear," said the Franciscan. "You are the eighteenth century, I am the sixteenth, already I am late, very late."

He turned and strode to the other end of the garden, where he took up, in the full late sunlight, the walking of prayer.

The chaplain was inclined to a certain tenderness—it was so simple a defeat, there was so little honor in bagging a foe who was rational with despair.

The sun was crimson in its descent, dusk was near, the mountains lay in the glow of rose.

From the soldiers' chapel the Angelus rang out; the chaplain and the Franciscan at opposite ends of the garden sank to their knees. Within the Palace the cooks halted their work, the servants bowed before the silver they polished, the Bishop knelt in his bedroom by the side of his leather trunks, whose lids were open, revealing the copes of white silk and gold, of blue velvet starred in rose diamonds, the mitre of gold kid leather edged with pearls, the chasubles in gold and silver with holy images embroidered and painted, the satin slippers with gold crosses, the white linen undervestments worked with lace, the scarlet cassocks of ceremony, and the velvet wrappings that contained the jewelled chalice, monstrance, and ciborium which accompanied the Bishop wherever he went, even to the farthest and most outlandish town in his domain.



IV 1846
BITTERSWEET WALTZ

THEY COULD HARDLY KNOW THEY WERE CREATING A ROmantic tradition in 1846. The land looked the same as it had looked for centuries. The sunlight washed along the walls of the Old Palace with ageless splendor, and as the American troops drew closer and closer, ignoring the fatuous proclamations of the Governor and the lieutenants he sent on horseback with majestic threats, the epoch was in its dying fall.

In the stove room of the United States Hotel, opposite the Palace, there was much competent talk. It was the commercial element that devised the wholly mythical fate of the Mexican Governor and his court; nothing could be too dreadful as an end for that querulous tyrant, whose infamies lacked the saving grace of style, whose character dwelt in braggadoccio and was betrayed in cowardice. It is true that guitars, and serenades, and flashing white teeth, eagerly indiscreet passion, and the rest of the racial marks of life in the Royal City, were exciting. But to the accompaniment of murder and robbery, farcical attempts at justice, these things lost desirability. Levi Wurzburg, with the other men of his age and trade, was more than delighted when General Kearny answered the Governor's latest threat by reading it, smiling, and continuing the march from Las Vegas.

And when the long columns of blue soldiers on horseback halt-

ed outside the city to receive the surrender from the Lieutenant Governor (for his chief, who had fled, clutching his riches to his stomach in the last throes of indignity), Levi was on hand to dance and throw his hat, and scream hoarse welcome to the American soldiers.

General Kearny received the Lieutenant Governor with good manners, gave a command, and the cavalry moved into the Royal City as owners for the American government.

Once again the streets were lined by speculative eyes as the sun-colored soldiers rode by. The women estimated the tempers and the susceptibilities of the invaders: there were old eyes full of resentment that invasion had occurred, particularly at such a tragic time of life as their own; there were young eyes full of the intemperate promises that the ladies of that race always made to their conquerors. General Kearny's soldiers felt the sting of the mountain air; when they drew up in formation in the plaza while the General read his proclamation of amnesty and martial law, there was something agreeable about the prospect of staying in the town for a while.

In the evening there was a dinner at the Palace. The General and his officers sat down with the Lieutenant Governor and some of the substantial citizens, among whom Levi Wurzburg had earned his right to be included. His neighbors thought of him as a merchant prince. His wife, a Spaniard of a shrewdness that matched his own, brought her ancient inherited graces to the business of abetting his eminence. After dinner, Señora Wurzburg and her daughters were in front of the Palace.

With an honorable tenacity, Levi managed to bring General Kearny away from the party long enough to meet his wife and children. It was a classic moment, which he described as one to be remembered and told to properly respectful descendants. General Kearny assisted Levi in making it a racially successful occasion, and the Wurzburg girls were ravished by the charm of the conqueror, while their mother stood fingering her black laces, her

heavy gold brooches, her faint mustache, her heavy wrinkled jaws.

The light from inside the Palace bathed them all in a dim splendor.

Across the plaza, jubilee sounded in the United States Hotel; the soldiers and the local wits were relaxing. Bonfires turned the mud houses a gallant orange in the blue night.

Levi was full of a bowel-changing happiness; there would now be American rule, his business was safe forever, there would be happier times for the family, with officers, and eventually, a new society.

An *aide* came out of the Palace and reported that General Kearny's presence was requested inside by the Lieutenant Governor.

The General bowed to Señora Wurzburg; his heavy epaulettes showered forward across his blue shoulders. He bowed to the Señoritas Wurzburg, and then, turning, with an afterthought, presented his *aide*, Brevet Captain Duncan.

The young man bowed and shook hands, unaware of the sharp fury of Señora Wurzburg's regard, as she drew her black lace across her face, leaving only her eyes that now looked remote and dynamic, as if they generated some fire of resentment and classification. With an automatic movement, she grasped the waist of her younger child, drew her away, and was reaching for the older, when Captain Duncan offered his arm for a promenade down the long pillared portal of the Palace. Leah Wurzburg put her little hand in the clothy crook of his elbow, and went with him, loudly admiring the imminent stars.

Mornings of full summer gold saw the new flag rise over the Palace, and evenings that fell upon the scarcely completed dusk saw that flag come down.

The month of August went by in a glory of readjustments; September came, and the aspens up the canyon began to taste the sharp frosty air of early morning with the presage of wintry decline. Enthusiasm was contagious; the Royal City accelerated its gaieties; there seemed to be a nostalgia from the fine tragic

history of the past mingled with the bright promises of this new future, whose symbols were the soldiers, a rough caste of men, yet for all their national rowdiness, honest and innocently so, without any virtuous awareness of honesty such as the Latin often felt.

The moment seemed to have such a bright newness that it was almost a mockery of the ancient land on which it rested.

Who could judge the values of romanticism that then came together, first in conflict, then in hybrid confusion?

The bells still rang out at morning and evening, circling the Royal City with their calls like white doves, the guitars still thumped like faintly ridiculous hearts beating, the dance was still the fandango, and still the *vals despacioso*, though it was a a stimulating pleasure to learn the Missouri breakdown from these soldiers, who laughed all the time, even when a jealous husband or lover made the signs of pugnacity with teeth, dagger, and curse.

On the last night, the officers got no sleep at all.

The General allowed a ball to be given.

Violinists came from Las Vegas, Albuquerque, all the cities that could contribute to the orchestra. There were three harps, eleven violins, a violoncello, and a flute. In that night of late September, they engendered music that was like the blood of happiness. A thousand candles with crystals and silver lighted the long old rooms, one after the other in straight succession. The windows were open, the Palace was a pavilion of romance and music where the army of occupation danced for the last time with the girls of the Royal City.

In exactly the nick of time, one of Levi Wurzburg's wagon trains had arrived from Mexico City with the latest gowns from Paris. There was one of cream-colored satin for Leah; she wore it with her heart revealed in the style of the madonnas her mother revered. In her hair, which was pulled upward from her sweet nape and piled widely about her ears, she wore two diamond combs that had belonged to a great Vicereine in the old days. In her hands she carried a small fan painted with *amorini*.

In her eyes she carried a tragic satisfaction that if to-morrow came, to-day had come before it.

Brevet Captain Duncan came for her very properly in the only coach in town, one that was often used to carry the sacraments in, one that Captain Duncan had achieved by bribery and corruption.

All the night long the dance went on; in the cry of the violins and the rills of melody from the harps, like brook water tumbling across little stones, in the shuffle of feet across the difficult board floors of the Palace, in the tiny clanging of spurs, in the laughter, and in the moan of the 'cello when the slow waltz, the *vals despacioso,* was played, the morning's sharp arrival with bugle and drum was dreaded.

If the General took his departure shortly after midnight, his officers understood that it was because someone must be awake to start on the long journey to-morrow, to California. For the rest, there would never be another night like this: never such girls with mouths like wild strawberries, sweet, desirable, and warm, who offered themselves in the slow waltz to a bittersweet abandon as brief and as enduring as the inciting wind that travelled in the night from the mountains, as the call of the violins and the harps in that long vista of candle-lighted rooms, where the uniform turned with the black lace, the cream-colored satin, the scarlet mantillas, the roses, the diamond eardrops—

Such things had a value that was perhaps enriched by the arrival of dawn across the mountains.

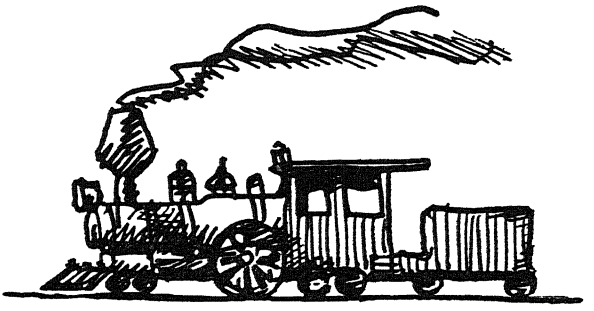
The flute was stilled, the violins with backs like the polished coat of a fine horse, the swanlike harps, were set in the corner.

In the dusty assembly of the troops, the bugle cracked the morning air with orders. Saddles and equipment creaked and clashed.

The flag was up, casting its watery shadow on the Old Palace.

A voice cried an order; the blue column moved out and was wished Godspeed by the ladies of the Royal City.

They stood in ball dress in the early sunlight, waving.



V 1878
FROCK COATS & the LAW

IT WAS AN ELEGANT RAILROAD CAR THAT BROUGHT the new Governor of the Territory as far as Trinidad, Colorado. In 1878 it was still necessary to leave that gold and plush carriage, with its filigreed oil lamps, carved partitions, velvet draperies edged with bolero bangles, at the Colorado line, and continue the journey to the capital of New Mexico by buckboard, two days and one night.

In the pocket of his frock coat that was made of thick broadcloth, General Wallace carried his preliminary reports. The President, also clad in a frock coat and broadcloth trousers that looked tubular, like stove pipe, dull black with formal wrinkles, had sent a soldier, a General of the Civil War, to bring order to the bleak land where the murderous cattle war was flourishing.

An exact epitome of his time, the new Governor arrived with a war record, an established growth of whiskers, a knowledge of quotable Latin, and the partly finished manuscript of a tremendous novel, subtitled "A Tale of the Christ." He rode into the city in his overland buckboard, drove around the plaza, saw the Exchange Hotel a block east of the Cathedral, and the painted sign atop a saloon absurdly reading "Take a Gin Fiz," and finally pulled up at the Palace of the Governors.

Another siege had opened within those aged walls.

General Wallace found a city of narrow streets, lined with low adobe houses, inscrutable with small windows, the frames painted a convivial blue.

He had learned something of the history of the Royal City before coming to inhabit its Palace.

He found that the ancient Spanish graces were gone; it was easy enough to believe in the traditions of the Castilian nobility who once had moved in the society there; but few enough of its traces survived. Nor could he honestly report to President Hayes or Mr. Secretary Schurz that what he had found as his new capital was a truly American city. What there was of the United States there, was compounded of pioneer ways that had solemn virtues, and of outlaw manners that had equally solemn dangers. For the rest, the inner life of the people, the unfinished Cathedral, and the strife of the Archbishops against obstacles of distance and languidness no doubt sufficed.

Concerned with the manuscript of a Methodist epic, he sat up in the light of a student lamp until late at night, in an old arm chair with faded velvet cushions, holding a writing board across his knees while the pen poured out page after page of "Ben Hur."

But his daytimes were busy with investigation and report.

The outrages to the south, where the cattle war went on, presently took on concentration in a single ideal figure; out of the welter of thieves and murderers and convicts that formed the majority of the fighters, a boy appeared and at once achieved a popular renown that was vigorous enough to oppose that of the Governor.

William Bonney was a little fellow and he was called Billy the Kid. He stood for his photograph against a sunlighted adobe wall, his hat on the back of his rough head, his eyes pale, his mouth open showing small teeth that lifted the lip slightly, his short arms by his side, holding in his small hands the firearms of his trade. There was no record on the film of the instant efficacy he was capable of.

People never believed that Billy Bonney was really a smart assassin until they saw him or his victims.

General Wallace, nursing his beard and "Ben Hur" through long studious nights, sent messages of Christian hope to the terrorized county; amnesty would follow a full confession of sins and a promise to do better.

Oaths of scorn were the answers.

Mrs. Wallace, Susan, came out the year after to join the Governor in the Old Palace, which horrified her by its dilapidation—the ceiling sagged, the boards of the floor were laid directly upon the hardened earth. How strange the horsehair sofas of the period looked against the white-washed walls! Yet (for she was a woman of taste) how handsome, once it became familiar as a style.

If the General had found the place socially bleak, his wife was even more disappointed.

It was sometimes agreeable to gather with certain of the ladies of the town in the afternoon, either in the Palace or in one of the mansions further up Palace Avenue, such as the Staab house, with its yellow and white stone, its deep lawns with iron animals and weeping willows, its sombre elegances in the more acceptable style of the English Queen. On such occasions, Susan Wallace heard charming stories of the old days: how romantic it was in the time of the American military occupation in the 1840's, with the picnics, the balls at Fort Marcy, the parades, the liveliness that a garrison of officers must always bring.

And stories of an even earlier time—an ancient lady, in black lace with gold brooches enamelled in black, could remember such prodigies of romance as duels and deaths behind the soldiers' chapel, vast state dinners like the one they had when one of the Bishops of Durango came from Mexico, and elopements across the prairies on swift horses, with pursuit in the form of a cavalcade on silver saddles.

Mrs. Wallace was tactful—the colors of the past meant much

to these ladies; and she saved her complaints for the letters she wrote home.

The only diversions were reading and listening to the band concerts on Sunday evenings. The plaza was crowded with buggies; they came from ranches in the surrounding country, and from the carriage houses of the rich people in Palace Avenue. The Mexicans, unaffectedly happy in their best clothes, made each concert a *fiesta*. The girls, practising inherited arts of flirtation, circled the bandstand in one direction, walking in sodalities of opinion. The boys, early matured with wise eyes and small mustaches, walked in the opposite direction around the band which strove with "The Alhambra Gavotte de Concert." There was constant exchange of messages, and the horses neighed, babies wailed.

Mrs. Wallace was sure it must be a unique spectacle—one that had elements of prettiness in it—though Lew detested the band.

While she wrote her letters, describing their trips into the warring territory with humor and bravery, the General contrived to have President Hayes declare an Insurrection in New Mexico; and four troops of cavalry began active operations. The citizens were relieved; they felt that victory over the desperadoes would close forever any such outbreaks of murder and theft.

There were two kinds of self-righteousness, that of the outlaw, of Billy the Kid, which saw itself as the instrument of personal justice and revenge; and that of the frock-coated Governor and his tremendous significance as the type of government.

The frock coat prevailed with the law in two months—"and at the end of that time the desperadoes were driven out of the country, armed factions were broken up, and the best grazing section of country in the United States was opened to immigrants," wrote the Governor.

So he contributed to the chronicle of change that makes all history.

He loved the air in Santa Fe, the sunlight which was so clear and so full of promise that such weather must last forever.

It was easy, out of doors, to forget the outlandish things that crossed his private and official path at every step, it was even easier to forget them in his writing room, where he closed himself in, night after night, with the student lamp.

The manuscript grew; he worked sometimes ten hours at a time, though Susan was troubled for fear of his betrayal by that very lamp he used to see by.

She wrote home that Billy the Kid was heard to remark, "I intend to ride into the plaza at Santa Fe, hitch my horse in front of the Palace, and put a bullet through Lew Wallace."

He would then surrender and be hanged. Susan thought that the lamp threw too clear a silhouette of her husband on the window—what if that tragically foolish boy from Lincoln actually rode up and attempted to prove what a great man he was? She closed the shutters herself.

And when she went back east, she made him promise to do the same.

But she had not long to worry; a competent sheriff shot William Bonney one night in a dark room.

"Ben Hur" was nearly finished; the railroad was coming closer and closer, and at last it reached Santa Fe.

There were celebrations.

General Wallace realized that now it was really gone—that time of which they all talked in the Royal City—when the life of town and land was of necessity intensely local and independent. He wrote under his lamp; the shutters were open to the black sky that faded to a mysterious glow, down at the edge of the mountains. Presently he was able to write to Susan that the long book was done; he would soon be home with her. There would be no more of those solitary nights beside his lamp, with the night made melancholy by the call of the engine whistles from the railroad, a new sound.

Before, only the sound of bells in the church towers had fallen over the Palace and the whole of the Royal City.

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